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Daily Variety

December 11, 1997 Thursday

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 39

LENGTH: 330 words

HEADLINE: WB Pay TV plays music

BODY:

ANAHEIM --- Warner Bros. Domestic Pay TV will produce a weekly half-hour music magazine series exclusively for DirecTV, to begin in February 1998.

Larry Chapman, executive VP of DirecTV, told a news conference at the Western Cable Show that one of the purposes of the series is "to build awareness for the concert events that we schedule and for our 32 CD-audio channels."

Two music specials will also be part of the deal, Chapman said. Depending on the price of the talent on these two specials, they'll be either pay per view or, like this week's Rolling Stones concert, a freebie to DirecTV subscribers. Huge performer guarantees might make it impossible for DirecTV to present the concert for free.

Chapman's counterpart at Warner Bros. Pay TV, exec VP Eric Frankel, said the music show will be different from the news reports that now run on MTV and VH1 because it'll cover areas that MTV shies away from, such as movie soundtracks and country performers. "Lots of people want to know about Garth Brooks' new CD," says Frankel. And movie soundtracks are a natural area of coverage because movies form the bulk of DirecTV's programming.

Warner Pay TV has become a more active producer of programming, with the weekly "Robin Hood" hours on TNT, the weekly hourlong "Hard Rock Live" music series on VH1 and the shift of "Babylon 5" originals from first-run syndication to TNT.

Ed Bleier, president of Warner Bros. Domestic Pay TV, used the news briefing as a platform to proclaim that "February will be the biggest month in the history of pay-per-view" because of the lineup of movies, including "Face/Off," "Contact," "Con Air," "Conspiracy Theory" and "My Best Friend's Wedding."

But he added that some cable operators will not get Warner Bros. movies like "Contact" and "Conspiracy Theory" at the same time as DirecTV because the ops are not willing to put up the buy-rate guarantee that Direct, which gets it the earlier window, has agreed to.

--- John Dempsey

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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Business Wire

November 12, 1997, Wednesday

DISTRIBUTION: Business Editors

LENGTH: 1141 words

HEADLINE: DIRECTV Agreement With Action Adventure Network Marks Entry Into  
Original First-Run Entertainment

DATELINE: LOS ANGELES

BODY:

Nov. 12, 1997--TELESCENE FILM GROUP (ME:TFG.B.) (TSE:TFG.B.) Telescene Film Group, Richmel Productions and Goodman/Rosen Productions have established a new 200 million US dollars - plus venture - Action Adventure Network (AAN) - and signed an agreement with DIRECTV, Inc. for AAN to arrange for the development and production of the first original television movies and series to air on DIRECTV. AAN's agreement with DIRECTV, which has more than 3 million subscribers, marks the first time in the United States that a direct broadcast satellite television service will serve as the exclusive platform to premiere first-run entertainment prior to it being sold to syndication or other traditional distribution platforms.

The new venture, which will arrange for the development and production of original programming for the global marketplace, will work with major creative and acting talent. AAN has already signed executive production agreements, or is in final negotiations, for John Landis and Leslie Belzberg's St. Clare Entertainment, Francis Ford Coppola's American Zoetrope and Steven deSouza for feature-length, first-run, action-adventure two-hour episodes followed by multiple one-hour episodes based on each initial program. These programs will be produced or co-produced by Telescene.

In its first year, AAN will deliver four original two-hour initial episodes with budgets averaging 3 million US dollars per picture. Production on the initial programming package will commence in the first quarter of 1998 and air on DIRECTV next summer. Each of the two-hour initial episodes will serve as the series premiere for 20 one-hour episodes in year one, and 22 one-hour episodes in years two and beyond. In year two, AAN will supply four more original two-hour shows followed by series commitments. The programming will air on the DIRECTV TICKET Pay Per View service during primetime.

"I was an early fan of the idea of DIRECTV," said Coppola. "I was fascinated by the idea, sought them out, visited their broadcasting facility in Colorado, and of course, am very proud of its success. DIRECTV was the first programming service to offer "Apocalypse Now" in wide screen, high-definition format. Zoetrope is thrilled to be part of AAN and its venture with DIRECTV to create new and original programming."

"St. Clare's first venture into syndication has been with Buena Vista

Television as executive producer of the "Honey I Shrunk The Kids" series, which has been tremendously successful," said Landis. "So we look forward to further adventures in television and around the world with our AAN partners."

According to Bruce Moccia, executive vice president of Telescene Film Group (USA), Coppola's first project for the venture is a contemporary version of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde", which will be set in Hong Kong. The St. Clare project is an update of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Lost World." Additional AAN projects will be announced later this year.

"DIRECTV gives AAN a prestigious U.S. distribution platform where AAN can market and promote its titles," said Moccia. "This will enhance the value of our properties by creating a recognized brand before the U.S. rights are sold to traditional platforms such as network television, syndication, pay television or cable television."

"The action-adventure genre is extremely popular with movie and television lovers, and DIRECTV is excited to bring our subscribers what promises to be unparalleled entertainment from some of the biggest names in the film and television business," said Stephanie Campbell, senior vice president of Programming for DIRECTV. "We are very pleased to be the first source in the United States to air programming from AAN."

"The television marketplace, while highly competitive, is always open to original, high-quality productions," said Moccia. "With the formation of AAN, we will target projects that will deliver a special cache to the broadcast/cable entities that will air them."

These agreements were brokered by David Tenzer of CAA, who represented Coppola and Landis, Howard Abrahamson of Behr and Abrahamson, who represented Landis, Eric Weissler of Armstrong Hirsch who represented American Zoetrope and Mark Itkin of the William Morris agency, who represented deSouza. Dan Black of Heenan Blaikie represented AAN.

All television, video, licensing/merchandising and sponsorship rights for these properties in the United States will be marketed by AAN, while Telescene Film Group will market these rights in Canada and the rest of the world.

Richmel Productions is a diversified entertainment company involved in television production, marketing and promotion, and strategic thinking for major media companies. Rich Melcombe, president and CEO of Richmel, created and executive-produced NBC's "Camp Cucamonga" movie, TBS "Our Gang" sitcom and syndication's "The Grudge Match." Richmel has produces major promotional campaigns for NBC, ABC, CBS, Buena Vista Television, Universal Television, Telepictures, Sony and TCI/Liberty Media.

Goodman/Rosen Productions has been involved in numerous international television ventures and theatrical films over the past decade. Partners Gary Goodman and Barry Rosen have produced nearly 200 hours of syndicated television programming, including "Police Academy", "Zorro: The Legend Continues", "The Mighty Jungle", and "Highlander". They have also produced such highly acclaimed and highly rated television movies as "Quarterback Princess", "The Stranger Within" and "The Cisco Kid".

Founded in 1977, Montreal-based Telescene Film Group Inc. has developed and

Business Wire, November 12, 1997

produced award-winning features and broadcast/cable television series, miniseries and movies in both English and French for the global marketplace. Some of Telescene Film Group's high-profile projects include the multi-award winning miniseries "Hiroshima" along with the series "Student Bodies" and "The Hunger". Telescene Film Group (USA) is based in Los Angeles and the company's Telescene Entertainment unit is based in New York City. -0-

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URL: <http://www.businesswire.com>

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: November 13, 1997

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Copyright 1997 The Sporting News Publishing Company  
The Sporting News

November 10, 1997

SECTION: OPENERS; Pg. 4

LENGTH: 304 words

HEADLINE: Channeling A continuing look at the best and worst of sports viewing

BODY:

INSIDE OUTSIDE: ESPN focused its most recent Outside The Lines offering on the topic of "Sportsmanship in the '90s: Is Winning The Only Thing?"

Somewhere along the way, sportsmanship has been lost amid end zone shuffles, hardwood high fives and forearm bashes.

Allen Iverson: "I'd rather win than have good sportsmanship."

Terrell Davis: "What is sportsmanship? Never heard of it. There's no such thing as sportsmanship."

In case you missed it, you did not see NFL saint Brian Cox discussing the topic with a group of eighth graders, reports by Mary Ann Grabavoy and Jeremy Schaap about sportsmanship at the high school level, and a profile by Shelley Smith on "Gentleman Joe" Dumars.

The program was followed by an ESPN Town Meeting on the same topic with sports celebrity panelists.

Lest you think all is lost, there was this nugget from Michael Jordan: "Good sportsmanship means a lot. ... In some ways that means a lot more than actually winning the game."

The Outside the Lines segment will be replayed November 23 at 1:30 p.m.; December 5 at 7:30 p.m.; and December 14 at 1 p.m. (All times are Eastern).

DIRECT TO YOU: College basketball fans with mini-dishes can order ESPN Full Court package for the 1997-98 season, exclusively from DIRECTV.

Hundreds of out-of-market games throughout the regular season will involve teams from the Big Ten, Big East, ACC, Big 12, SEC, Atlantic 10, Conference USA, Missouri Valley, Big West, Sun Belt, America East and Ohio Valley.

The regular-season price is \$ 89. Fans who order before December 29 will receive a \$ 20 discount.

FAR-REACHING CLOUT: HBO Sports has announced plans to explore the life and career of Babe Ruth in an hourlong documentary set to be televised next summer.

The show will be August 16--the 50th anniversary of Ruth's death.

The Sporting News, November 10, 1997

--Ken Amos  
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November 6, 1997, Thursday

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HEADLINE: Channel Earth is On the Air With Sony's Digital Solutions

DATELINE: SAN JOSE, Calif.

BODY:

Nov. 6, 1997--Channel Earth is originating its broadcasts at a digital state-of-the-art facility in Chicago, designed by Sony Electronics' Systems Integration Center and outfitted with Sony's digital hardware and software including the FlexSys(TM) Transmission System.

The channel, which began broadcasting in March, with a bureau in Washington, and crews around the world, feeds an audience that is largely rural and scattered.

Channel Earth was conceived to provide news, weather and feature information geared toward the specific needs of people interested in the agriculture industry. As a result, many of the viewers who receive Channel Earth's 13.5 hours of daily programming exclusively via DirectTV(TM) either live or work on farms and homesteads in every remote corner of the country.

"Channel Earth provides an essential service for our viewers," said Channel Earth's director of engineering, Russ Rodriguez. "It delivers information which can have either an immediate or long term effect on our viewers' businesses. As a result, the volume of programming, much of which is international, and the technical demands on our broadcast facility are quite high. These factors were carefully considered by Channel Earth and Sony Electronics when we began constructing the facility."

Designed at the channel's request to offer a single manufacturer, turn-key approach, Sony's digital broadcast equipment fills the station's studio, operations and post-production rooms.

Among the digital products Channel Earth uses are Sony's DVS-V6464B serial digital routing switcher, the DVS-M1000C master control switcher, the DVS-7000 switcher, the DME-7000 multi-effects unit, the FlexSys transmission and commercial insertion system, DVW-A500 Digital Betacam(R) video tape recorders, Betacam SX(R) Hybrid Recorders and SX DNW-7 camcorders.

"The best accolade you can give any broadcast equipment is that it keeps the on-air operation going without failure," Rodriguez added. "In the case of the Sony equipment, there was another key factor: its ease of use. After all, we believe this is among the country's first all-digital stations from acquisition to delivery, and for most of the technicians here, there is nothing to compare



it to."

"On both counts, the performance has made my job easier," Rodriguez added.

"The switcher has great built-in features and, equally as important, the ability to grow with the operation. It also works very well in combination with the DME. The router has caused zero down time, and the Betacam SX camcorders are tremendous. Their flexibility in various lighting conditions is terrific, and the quality of the image is remarkable, something I would only expect in a more expensive camera.

"The quality of the digital programming is its own best sales tool for the station; the pictures are phenomenal. Sony service has been extremely responsive, when needed, but, generally speaking, they have created a very reliable system."

The FlexSys transmission system provides both program playback and commercial insertion, which is operated by hardware, software and modular RAID 3 storage using both tape and disc technology. "The FlexSys system is used to handle 20 elements per hour, and it rarely misses a beat," Rodriguez said. "Also, the learning curve has been very fast."

Channel Earth's start-up period from conception to air was very short, according to Rodriguez. In order to meet the March 28 air date, the channel was housed for the first few months in two National Mobile Television trucks, including DX-1. The trucks were largely outfitted with the Sony digital products now in the broadcast plant, which provided the channel with an advance look at some of their key purchases.

"We've been pleased since we started working together," Rodriguez continued.

"There were enormous challenges to get this facility completed on time, but I never felt that any of our needs were compromised for the sake of speed. The Sony integrators worked their magic to get us what we needed, not what they thought we needed. If equipment wasn't available, they found us replacements. From sales to design to installation, it was a great team."

Channel Earth is presently completing the second phase of construction which will increase the number of post suites. Phase three construction will include a second broadcast studio. -0-

Note to Editors: More information about Sony products can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://www.sony.com/professional>, or readers may call 1-800-686-SONY. Additional press information is available at <http://www.sony.com/news>.

The Business and Professional Group of Sony Electronics is a leading U.S. supplier of video and audio equipment for the broadcast, production, business, industrial, government, medical, and education markets. Sony offers a wide array of products and systems for image capture, production, and display. Sony also provides specialized equipment and systems for data recording, duplication, electronic photography/publishing, video conferencing, high definition video, interactive and security applications. In fiscal 1996, Sony Electronics had record sales of more than \$ 9.6 billion.

Business Wire, November 6, 1997

eh/sf\* azs/ahc/as/sf

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